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3. — *Société des anciens textes français*: I. *Les plus anciens monuments de la langue française (IX^e, X^e siècle) publiés avec un commentaire philologique* par GASTON PARIS, *Album*. Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie. 1875. 10 planches. Fol. — II. *Chansons du XV^e siècle publiées d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris* par GASTON PARIS, et accompagnées de la musique transcrite en notation moderne par AUGUSTE GEVAERT. Paris. 1875. — III. *Brun de la Montaigne. Roman d'Aventure publié pour la première fois, d'après le manuscrit unique de Paris* par PAUL MEYER. Paris. 1875. — IV. *Bulletin de la Société des anciens textes français*. Nos. 1 – 4. 1875.

THE above-named works constitute, with one to be mentioned later, the first year's publications of the recently established Old-French Text Society. There have been before this French societies for the publication of old texts, but none that could compare with such societies as the Early English Text Society, etc. The present society has been organized to meet this want, and the results of its labors for its first year justify fully its establishment and give great promise of its future usefulness. The scope of the society embraces the publication of "mediæval documents of all kinds, whether Old-French or Provençal," and although thus far mention has been made of only Old-French works, it is to be hoped that the literature of the South of France will not be overlooked. The first work published contained most appropriately the oldest monuments of the French language, viz. the Oaths of Strasbourg, 842, the *Canitène de Sainte Eulalie*, the *Passion du Christ*, *Vie de Saint Léger*, and *Fragment d'une Hom. lie sur le Prophète Jonas*, all of the tenth century.* These are all given *in extenso* after the most approved method of photolithography. Portions of these documents had previously been published in facsimile, but it is only necessary to compare this last edition with the plates in Roquefort (*Glossaire de la langue romane*, Paris, 1808, Tom. I. p. 20), and in Champollion-Figeac (*Documents hist. inéd.*, Paris, 1848, Tom. IV. p. 424) to show how unreliable the latter are, and what immense improvements have been made in this field. The value of the present publication can hardly be overestimated. The five monuments here made accessi-

* Diez, in his *Altromanische Sprachdenkmale*, Bonn, 1846, assigns the *Canitène* to the ninth century, but says, p. 16: "Wäre das Alter der Handschrift nicht so wohl verbürgt, so könnten Gründe aus der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Sprache geschöpft an der Richtigkeit desselben zu zweifeln verleiten." Since then the MS. has been assigned to the tenth century. See E. du Méril, *Essai phil. sur la form. de la langue franç.*, p. 404; Littré, *Hist. de la langue franç.*, II. p. 283.

ble to the public for the first time in their original form contain the earliest specimens of French, and show the rapid development of the language into a flexible and satisfactory literary medium. For the first time, too, foreign scholars can study these precious remains as well as if they had the manuscripts before them, and it is very interesting to see how Diez and others were misled by the old and defective fac-similes, and also how many of the first-named scholar's emendations are confirmed by the readings of the manuscripts. The editor promises a *commentaire philologique*, which is to be one of the publications for 1876, and has not yet appeared. The student will find meanwhile very careful transcripts of the *Vie de St. Léger* and the *Passion du Christ* in the *Romania*, I. p. 273, II. p. 295, with notes by the present editor.* We may remark, in passing, that with the exception of the *Fragment de Valenciennes* (as the *Homélie sur le Prophète Jonas* is technically called, from the library where it was found), which is partly written in *notes tironiennes*, the other documents may be read without any previous knowledge of palæography.

If the interest of the volume we have just noticed is purely philological, that of the second is almost exclusively literary. The *Chansons du XV^e siècle* contains one hundred and forty-three *chansons*, carefully edited with notes and a glossary by M. Paris. The value of this publication is also great from a standpoint which has only recently acquired much importance. The interest of almost every nation in Europe has, within the past few years, been awakened in their national popular traditions, whether embodied in nursery tales or popular ballads. The necessity for preserving these products of the popular muse has been especially felt in those countries where there is danger of their disappearing before the march of national unity and modern education. France has of late years produced some very valuable collections of her popular poetry, but comparatively little attention has been paid to the songs of past generations. The editor deplotes this neglect, and trusts that France may soon have a complete collection of her old *chansons* on which all the resources of modern scholarship may be spent. The character of the collection before us is as varied as possible, — *pastourelles*, *rondes*, *chants d'amour*, satirical pieces, and songs recording contemporary events. Some are Norman, others from Lyons, Picardy, and Burgundy. The dialects of Savoy, Provence, and Gascony are represented, and there is even a ballad in Spanish on the death of Prince Alfonso of Portugal (died 1491). The poems in this collection

* The monuments are best treated in the works of Littré, Du Méril, and Diez, previously mentioned, and in the last-named scholar's *Zwei altromanische Gedichte*, Bonn, 1852.

do not differ in character from those already published of this period. However, as the editor truly says in his Preface (p. v), "Toutes ont ce mérite et ce prix incomparable d'être l'expression fidèle et spontanée du génie français, et de nous livrer des traits dont plusieurs semblent avoir disparu, dont d'autres sont indélébiles, mais qui tous appartiennent à la physionomie la plus intime de notre peuple."

The third publication of the society, *Brun de la Montaigne*, is unfortunately only a fragment, and it is impossible to tell how much is lacking, although to judge from the story a considerable portion must be lost. The literary value of the poem is very small, but it has preserved some interesting mediæval beliefs in regard to fairies, and also affords the oldest example of the modern French rule about the feminine cæsura. The poem opens at the birth of a son of Butor de la Montaigne. The father summons his vassals, and expresses his desire to have the infant carried to the forest of Breceliant to a spring where the fairies were accustomed to meet during the night. Bruiant, one of his principal vassals, takes charge of the child and watches over him at a distance, while he is exposed near the fountain. Three beautiful fairies approach, singing, and begin to examine the child. Two of them bestow their gifts upon him : he shall be beautiful and courteous ; he shall be feared in war and tournaments, and honored by all. The third fairy, however, the most powerful of all, piqued because the others have anticipated her, is less favorable : the child shall be without a friend (*mendiant d'amie*) in his youth, his love shall not be returned, he shall be another Tristan ; and she so names him ; and, finally, more angry, she declares that the one he loves shall marry in his presence a humpback rustic (*un vilain bossu*). The child is carried back to his father, who is not at all affected by the malediction of the bad fairy, and has his son baptized Brun. Meanwhile a nurse presents herself at the castle, and takes charge of the child. She puts him to sleep, and then disappears to return before the infant awakes. It was one of the good fairies, who at the fountain had put a ring upon the child's finger. The good fairy takes charge of Brun for fifteen years, then she tells him that the time has come for him to love, and recalls the prediction of the bad fairy. After Brun has loved for ten years a lady whom he will see marry the humpback, his nurse will return and comfort him. Brun starts out on his adventures, and the poem is cut off just as he has fallen in love, and the predictions of the bad fairy are about to be realized.

The editor says that before this poem fairies have been represented surrounding the cradle of a child and bestowing their gifts on him, but no one until the author of *Brun de la Montaigne* has informed us of the usage which must have existed of carrying children to the fountain where the fairies met.

The most noteworthy thing about the poem is its form, which is that of the *chansons de geste* (Alexandrines), although the poem in question is a *roman d'aventure*. There is, however, one important difference. In Old-French versification the verse of ten and twelve syllables admitted at the end of each hemistich an unaccented syllable which did not count. In modern French this has been restricted to the second hemistich alone. Hence the verse with feminine rhyme. When an unaccented syllable occurs at the end of the first hemistich it must be elided, that is, the following word must begin with a vowel. This modern usage has, until the publication of Brun de la Montaigne, not been traced farther back than the poet Jehan le Maire, who lived at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is, however, found observed, with few exceptions, in the poem before us, which is more than a century older than the works of Jehan le Maire.*

The fourth and last volume for 1875 is in press, and will shortly be issued to subscribers. It is the *Débat des Hérauts de France et d'Angleterre*, followed by "The Debate between the Heraldes of Englande and Fraunce," compiled by John Coke.

In addition to the works above named the society also publishes a Bulletin, which contains, in addition to reports on the affairs of the society, notices of manuscripts relating to Old-French literature which are not of a character to publish *in extenso*. The Bulletin for the first year contains notices of three interesting manuscripts, one of which, *Bib. Nat.* 25, 415, *Fonds Fr.*, contains various works in Provençal of extreme value for the history of mediæval traditions.

The society, in short, is doing excellent work, and deserves the hearty support and recognition of scholars in this country.

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4. — *Life of Edwin Forrest, the American Tragedian*. By WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1877. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 431, 433.

MR. ALGER'S life of Edwin Forrest is confessedly a good deal more than a biography. Its plan, the author tells us in his Preface, "is that of a philosophical history," which adds to the narration of events a discussion of their causes and their teachings, and "intersperses the mere recital of personal facts and incidents with studies of the principal topics of a more general nature intimately associated with" them. Clearly,

* An interesting note on this subject by A. Mussafia will be found in the *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, I. p. 98.